

HOLOCAUST Museum

By Staff Sgt. Nathan Akridge 31st ADA PAO, NCOIC



FORT SILL, Okla.- George Santayana once said “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” It was with these famous words in mind that the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade Equal Opportunity Office, along with Installation EO representatives, travelled to Dallas, Texas, to visit the Holocaust Museum there. The EO Soldiers visited the museum in order to get a better understanding of the events that led up to the Holocaust. It was also a great opportunity for the 31st ADA EO Office to bring back some items to put on display during the Fort Sill Holocaust Observance Luncheon on April 25th.

“As an EOA team, we try and do some type of professional development every quarter by going to various locations and learning about certain cultures and or events in time. Although small, the museum offered more than enough artifacts from the Holocaust time period and was definitely eye opening with a great experience shared by all,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Hart, the 31st ADA equal opportunity advisor. As the EO team spent time looking at the different exhibits, the enormity of what the Holocaust meant weighed on them. “Seeing the shoes made of hair was very eye-opening as it portrayed the true courage of survival. Many of the Jews had little to nothing as they moved around Europe to the various concentration/death camps. Seeing this gave me a sense of inspiration because it showed that even through diversity, people aspired to live no matter what the conditions,” said Hart.

For some of the EO representatives, this was their first time actually seeing items from the Holocaust. The Fort Sill Installation Victim Advocate Staff Sgt. Nicole Grigler has never been to a Holocaust museum before and her emotions ranged from sadness to rage to confusion to helplessness while on the tour. “When we entered the museum the first thing I saw was a picture of a concentration camp that U.S. forces secured and occupied. On the left side of the picture it showed dead bodies piled atop one another. On the right side of the same picture were U.S. military personnel along with U.S. Senators that

came to see the mass destruction and mass genocide committed at the hands of the Nazi's. It made me ask myself, Could it happen again?"

The museum also gave artifacts and presentations for use during the Fort Sill Holocaust Observance Luncheon. "When people go to the Days of Remembrance luncheon, I hope they get a feel of the true devastation the Holocaust inflicted on people's lives. During the event, people may expect a very somber mood due to the tragic events dating back to the WWII. We have a great guest speaker, Max Glauken who is an actual Holocaust survivor and ended up serving in the United States Army a few years later," said Hart. Dr. Charlotte Decoster, an employee at the museum, says she hopes the visit reminded the Soldiers of the importance of the U.S. military's actions in ending the Holocaust.

"I hope what they bring back is that we do hear about genocide all the time, and now they can have a better understanding of what genocide is, and how important it was for the U.S. military troops to take action back then and how the U.S. military's involvement saved so many lives.